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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, June 3, 2009****Members Present**

Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Hon. Paul Delorey, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Krutko, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Sandy Lee, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Michael McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Ramsay, Hon. Floyd Roland, Mr. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:38 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Honourable Michael McLeod.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 83-16(3):
DRIVE ALIVE UPDATE**

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to give Members an update on the Drive Alive Transportation Safety Program.

The Department of Transportation is dedicated to promoting safety on our roads, trails and waterways. By making safety a priority, this program delivers on the government's commitment to build our future. Drive Alive supports the Assembly's priority to build sustainable, vibrant and safe communities.

Drive Alive is a program based on collaborations and partnerships. Through our partnership with health care providers and RCMP, Drive Alive recently recognized the first members of the NWT Survivors Club. This initiative celebrates residents who made wise decision to wear their seatbelt, helmet or lifejacket, thus sparing them or their passengers from serious injury or death.

Mr. Speaker, through a partnership with Northern Stores, Drive Alive recently released a children's activity book. This fun and educational document introduces young people to thinking about the choices they need to make to travel safely.

Through a collaboration with CKLB Radio, the department released the new Drive Alive rap song which was written and performed by Aaron Hernandez, also known as Godson. The rap song was performed by Godson at the most recent Super Soccer tournament in Yellowknife and is being used on CBC TV as a public service announcement. It will be an integral part of our ongoing youth Outreach Program.

Drive Alive recently launched a "Be Safe This Summer" poster campaign which promotes safe

travel choices during the busy summer travel season. Bicycle helmets, acquired through a partnership with BHP Billiton, have been distributed throughout the NWT in time for the summer bicycle season.

Over the coming months Drive Alive will launch a boat safety and lifejacket awareness campaign to our communities. I'm very pleased to announce that as part of our Drive Alive lifejacket awareness campaign, the Department of Transportation has made a three-year commitment to provide the NWT Recreation and Parks Association with lifejackets for the Mackenzie Youth Leadership Tour. Participating youth and their instructors will promote water safety in Fort Simpson, Wrigley, and Tulita. Drive Alive will work closely with this organization to identify other opportunities to deliver boat safety and lifejacket awareness information to all NWT communities.

We are near the start of a busy summer boating season, so the matter of boat safety awareness is one of great urgency. Each year lives are tragically lost to drowning. Unfortunate accidents are almost entirely preventable. The following three tips if followed will save lives:

1. Wear your lifejacket. Don't leave it at home or on the floor of your boat.
2. Tell a responsible person where you're going and when you're expected to return.
3. Enjoy the outdoors without alcohol. Remember that driving any vehicle under the influence is dangerous and also against the law.

I encourage all Members to set a good example while travelling on our roads and trails or when boating. Wear your seatbelt, wear your lifejacket, and wear your helmet. Please have a safe summer on our roads, trails, and waterways, and drive alive.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 84-16(3):
MAXIMIZING NORTHERN EMPLOYMENT**

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, each year the Government of the Northwest Territories commits to maximizing a northern workforce through the hiring of summer students and interns. The Summer Student Employment Program, along with the

Northern Graduate Employment Program, is part of the Maximizing Northern Employment Strategy.

To follow up on questions raised in the House, I want to assure Members that there is a fair and equitable process for hiring summer students. I have committed to review the concerns raised by Members to ensure procedures are being followed.

The Summer Student Employment Program increases the number of northern students who find relevant employment in the Northwest Territories as well as within the Government of the Northwest Territories. The program also helps create and maintain an ongoing relationship between northern students and the Northwest Territories, regardless of where the students go to school.

I am pleased to announce today that as of June 1, 2009, the government has hired 245 students. The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to creating a public service that is representative of the public it serves. The Affirmative Action Policy is applied to summer student and intern hiring. Departments hired 83 students who are indigenous aboriginal and 130 are indigenous non-aboriginal.

Student hiring is expected to continue throughout the summer. Students interested in applying can go to the Human Resources website for more information or email their resumes to casuals@gov.nt.ca.

In 2008 the government provided 282 students with summer work experience. On June 12, 2009, the Department of Human Resources will hold a summer student orientation in Yellowknife which will provide students with an overview of the workings of government, the advantages of being a Government of the Northwest Territories employee, employee responsibilities, and worker safety. The department will offer regional orientations during the summer.

The Northern Graduate Employment Program helps northern post-secondary graduates obtain relevant work experience. The Graduate Internship Program assists northern post-secondary graduates gain work experience by working one-year internships within the public service. The department anticipates 34 interns will be hired during the 2009-2010 fiscal year. This is an increase from 2008-2009 when 24 interns were hired.

The Graduate Employment Program guarantees northern teacher, social worker, and nursing graduates employment within the Northwest Territories. The government health system will employ nine Northwest Territories nurse graduates in 2009-2010 through the Graduate Nurse Program. Five northern social work graduates are eligible for placement in 2009-2010 through the Graduate Social Worker Program.

I invite my colleagues to join me in welcoming all the interns, summer students, graduate nurses, and social workers who are working with the Government of the Northwest Territories this year. The summer student and intern employment opportunities offer these individuals insight into the public service work environment as well as valuable work experience. The Department of Human Resources will continue to work with Government of the Northwest Territories departments, boards and agencies to find new ways and even better means of providing such opportunities.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 85-16(3): POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Partnership is a key priority in developing a strong and effective government. The importance of partnerships with aboriginal governments, non-government organizations, and community agencies, industry, communities, and families has been highlighted in the priorities of this 16th Assembly and in Education, Culture and Employment's strategic plan. Today, I would like to highlight some recent development in education that involve cooperation and collaboration with many of these key groups.

One particular example of success is the Lutselk'e Dene School. The Lutselk'e Dene School has made great strides in improving student literacy and incorporating the community into the school. A dedicated and creative group of teachers have created a genuine culture of learning in the school. They have incorporated parents, elders, on-the-land activities, and with the help of Aurora College and ECE, have streamlined programs for high schoolers and adults.

The South Slave Divisional Education Council's Leadership for Literacy Initiative, along with the placement of a full-time literacy coach, has resulted in almost every student at the school experiencing significant gains in reading achievement. Ninety percent of students achieved more than what is average in a full year of learning. The Lutselk'e Dene School is a shining example of how teachers, parents, students, and education authorities can come together and effect positive change in a school and community.

During the last session I spoke about the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative. Since then a committee has been formed with representation from the Dene Nation, industry, corporate business, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Metis, and the Native Women's Association, the NWT Teachers' Association, superintendents of schools,

and the GNWT. This committee met in early May and reviewed our consultation and research work to date, and determined some broad areas for focus in the coming year around public awareness of the education system, tutoring, and focused research.

The northern diamond mines have allowed us to extend our adult education and training resources in many ways. Our memorandum of understanding around the northern workforce ensures that Northerners across the NWT have access to skills training and job opportunities in mining. The Mine Training Society, which is made possible through a funding partnership with the federal government and Diavik Rio Tinto, De Beers, and BHP Billiton, is an organization that builds projects with other partners, including government departments, aboriginal governments, and Aurora College, based on targeted needs. We would not be making the inroads we have made in developing a strong and prosperous society without the work that is done through these and many other partnerships with families and communities, aboriginal governments, non-government organizations, industry, and other governments.

I would like to close by thanking all our partners for their shared commitment to the future of the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INCOME SUPPORT CONCERNS IN NUNAKPUT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my Member's statement is on income support concerns. My riding of Nunakput is dealing with a legacy of neglect regarding income support to the residents. The high cost of living has limited services, for one reason or another. Healthy living in the communities is a lifestyle for only part of the population. I cannot understand how this government expects a person living in the small, isolated community, where a carton of milk is as high as \$10 for two litres, to live on \$400 a month.

Mr. Speaker, there is a huge disconnect between the department, between the way the support is delivered and the services that are needed to be paid for, and the policymakers in Yellowknife to the remote communities. In the communities, people, families and elders are literally going hungry. Healthy living in the communities go hand in hand. When people are living healthy, every aspect of the communities are impacted in a good way.

At times, when harvesting is close for caribou or any other big game close by, residents can live off traditional food and compensate. Mr. Speaker, this

is not a privilege all year round. Communities that are lucky to have a food bank have been stretched to the limits. The longer the government waits, it becomes a bigger problem. People try to get help but often get the run around and the blame game when dealing with government departments and financial problems in the communities. We need a true one-stop shop where the people can deal with all of their issues, where residents can get help so people can feed their families, Mr. Speaker.

I often visit residents in the communities. When I see the cupboards are bare or when they cannot afford to buy basic foods, it makes me wonder why this government is letting this happen, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the appropriate Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON YOUTH PARLIAMENTARIAN ALEX SMITH'S MEMBER'S STATEMENT - YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the week of April 20th to 24th, the Legislative Assembly and the Speaker hosted the Youth Parliament. It was a great opportunity to meet these young Northerners and listen to them make their Members' statements and debate their issues on the floor of this House during the official Youth Parliament. I believe that all of the participants should be applauded for their involvement and all of their hard work.

During the actual session, I was quite pleased to see that many of the Members' statements were very timely and raised concerns that are very real to the residents of the Northwest Territories. I was very happy to hear the Member's statement from the youth parliamentarian from Great Slave, Mr. Alex Smith. His statement was as follows. He said, "Today I would like to bring up the issues and concerns of youth homelessness. The concern I have with youth homelessness doesn't affect just Yellowknife, it affects everywhere in the Northwest Territories. Once youth age out of foster care at 16, they have nowhere to go and no support until the age of 19. Still they have very limited support between the ages of 16 to 19. Yellowknife and NWT residents are forced to live in underfunded shelters, friends' houses or, in the worst circumstances, they have to live on the streets.

"These shelters these youth run to consist of the Sutherland House in Fort Smith, the Family Support Centre in Hay River and the SideDoor in Yellowknife. There are also more shelters across the Northwest Territories but still very little help to

support the smaller communities. All these shelters are underfunded and can only do so much.

"When these youth have nowhere to run, they turn to drugs and alcohol because they think it will fix their problems. We need to help these youth who are in need, because they are our future."

I would like to thank Alex for his statement on an issue that needs to be dealt with. Youth aged 16 to the age of majority seemed to have slipped through the cracks of this government. Once they are too old to receive non-voluntary support through the Child and Family Services Act and before they are eligible for income support, these youth are left to fend for themselves, as Alex outlined.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important issue. At the appropriate time, I will be asking the Minister of Health and Social Services some questions on the topic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON AURORA OXFORD HOUSE FOUNDATION FUNDING

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like today to talk about a unique residence in the Frame Lake riding. Aurora Oxford House Foundation is a non-profit organization providing housing and services to individuals recovering from alcohol and drugs in Yellowknife. This foundation has been in existence since 2005. It runs a house for men and just recently opened up an Oxford House for women in my riding. These houses provide an alcohol and drug-free environment for their residents. They are self-supported and self-administered. They operate on a cost recovery basis. The rent paid by the members of each house covers the cost of operating the house. Because each house is sustainable on its own, these houses generally operate without government funding.

Due to the opening of the new ladies' Oxford House, the foundation incurred one-time start-up costs for that house, furniture, pots and pans, linens and so on. I want to express kudos and appreciation to the Department of Health and Social Services for their \$15,000 contribution to the Oxford House Foundation to get the ladies' house set up and operational.

Yellowknife now has a housing option for women with addictions, which will provide previously non-existent opportunities for them and help them change and make positive choices to improve their lives.

At the Aurora Oxford House Foundation, the success is due to two things. Firstly, their three charter principles which are: (1) that the house must be self-run on a democratic basis; (2) that the house must be financially self-supported; and (3)

that any resident who drinks alcohol or uses drugs must be immediately expelled. Secondly, the success is due to the hard work and dedication of the foundation's executive director, Mr. Byrne Richards. Thank you, Byrne, for the Oxford House Foundation and the option it provides to NWT residents. I anticipate that we will hear of the opening of more Oxford Houses in the near future. Job well done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak today both on environmental stewardship and this government's plan of action. First, Mr. Speaker, I think we can all take a moment for cautious congratulations. During this Assembly, we have taken a more aggressive approach to confronting our environmental challenges and we have made some good progress.

We have begun to consider and invest seriously in alternative and renewable energies through wind power and investigation of increasing large and small scale hydro use. As I have said, I want the current energy deliberations and reviews to incorporate these opportunities in its work. We are developing a Biomass Strategy. However, we know little about what is happening with the sustainable yield of our forests or how we can manage this. This insight has implications for costly fire control and is essential if biomass is to realize its vast potential for decreasing our reliance on oil.

I look forward to a critical review of the Biomass Strategy. We have made excellent progress in protecting species at risk. We need to address the gap of migratory birds under the Wildlife Act. I look forward to reviewing the bison and woodland caribou management plans and a new Wildlife Act.

We have devoted significant sums to helping people make their homes and businesses more energy efficient and we are developing an adaptation plan to belatedly counteract the expensive harms now being caused by climate change.

Mr. Speaker, this wide variety of activities boils down to two truths. It costs money to damage the environment; money we can spend on addressing our social ills and other priorities. Second, when we spend money in ways that protect the environment, we will get it back many times over in lower costs for our residents, good jobs in local small scale industry, reduced vulnerability to world market swings and, above all, by protecting the priceless quality of our northern way of life.

We have made some good progress on the environment but there is much yet to do: action on

mini-hydro implementation, solar opportunities, ground source heat, connecting our incentives to actual greenhouse gas reductions, greening our economy, aggressive implementation of biomass and other opportunities. Our leadership must provide an example that strengthens our call for national and global change.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the ongoing effective collaboration of Members in meeting these challenges. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to the government's responsibility for devolving programs and services to communities, a lot of times, Members from the smaller communities ask questions to the government in regards to particular activities that we would like to see an improvement on in our communities. And yet, Mr. Speaker, those program responsibilities still lie with this government: education in regards to our schools, our health centres and also including the policing services. It is services that are still being delivered by government departments. Yes, we transferred responsibility to local municipalities in regards to municipal services, but yet we still have programs and services that need attention in our smaller communities such as replacement of skills, improvement to our health care centres and, more importantly, improving the infrastructure that this government still has responsibility over.

The other area I think this government still has a clear responsibility for is in regards to water treatment plants in our communities. Mr. Speaker, in regards to the situation that happened in Walkerton, Ontario, in which the major municipalities were found liable in regards to those...(inaudible). So were the operators and so was the Ontario government. I think that this government cannot loosen its responsibility for those water treatment plants in our communities. If anything, I personally would request the communities to allow the government to retain that asset as a government asset, ensure that they are responsible for all liabilities associated with water treatment plants, the treatment of water and also the testing of water in our municipalities.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I think it's critical that this government does not say, well, sorry, we gave the money to the community, it's no longer our responsibility. This government is responsible for the assets that were put in place in our communities regardless if it happened 10 years ago or 20 years ago, because there are liabilities that

are associated with it regardless if its environmental or structural or there will be a need at some point to replace those assets as we're seeing in the Mackenzie Delta in regards to pilings on our buildings. More importantly, climate change and the implication it has on public infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I'd like to remind the government that they do have an obligation to our communities and not continue to say sorry, we gave the money to the communities. Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Premier questions on this later. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Member from Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROPOSED YOUTH CENTRE IN LUTSELK'E

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] Mr. Speaker, thank you. Mr. Speaker, the people from Lutselk'e School, they don't have very much to play with games and that. [Translation ends]

The youth have nothing to do. However, the youth have good ideas on the things that they would like to do. The youth would like to swim in the swimming pool, play foosball, play computer games, do homework with a computer in a quiet environment. Mr. Speaker, these are all things that the youth can do if they had a centre or a swimming pool. However, Mr. Speaker, none of these things are available in Lutselk'e today. Mr. Speaker, myself and all of Lutselk'e, especially the youth, would like to see the youth of Lutselk'e be able to do the things they desire to do.

Mr. Speaker, I have received a proposal from the community that voices their concerns for the lack of youth programs and the desire to open a youth centre. This proposal includes letters from 31 youth where they write about the support for opening a youth centre and some words. I would like to read some of their words today.

"I want a youth centre to be safe and keep out of trouble." Alayna, 11 years old.

"I want a youth centre to be safe, I want a youth centre, a place for kids that have nothing to do or a place where kids can stay out of trouble." That was Alexandria, 11 years old.

"A youth centre will be a good place for kids to stay out of trouble and keep kids safe from violence, drugs and alcohol." Miles, 13 years old.

"A youth centre would provide youth opportunities to learn and practice responsibility." Rebecca, 11 years old.

Mr. Speaker, the youth have spoken. Now we need to listen. I have raised youth concerns in this House on many occasions and although some progress has been made, I'm sure more can be done. Mr.

Speaker, I'd like to read one more excerpt from a letter from the older youth, and I quote: "I know it will cost a fair sum. You ask yourself is it worth it? Of course. The youth, they would have a place to eat, cook, watch movies, et cetera. Let them be kids while they're still young." Michael, 16 years old.

Mr. Speaker, a simple, very perceptive and almost profound insight from the Lutselk'e youth on the benefits of a youth centre in Lutselk'e. Later I'll have questions on this very important topic for the appropriate Minister. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Member from the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONSTRUCTION OF LOG HOMES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about something I feel strongly about. I think we need to go back to building log homes. These would be log homes that a young couple or a single person could build when they are starting out to make a life for themselves. The NWT Housing Corporation has a pilot project called A Basic Unique Approach. The corporation is looking at testing a couple of units that would be built for people who are living a traditional lifestyle. The owners could leave their homes to go trapping without any problems with regards to water freeze-up. This sounds like it could be developed into a good program. I believe if there is some consideration of using log construction, I would urge them to go ahead with it. I would go a step further, Mr. Speaker, and provide log housing packages, something like the former HAP housing package to people who are willing and able to build their own homes.

If we design a log home building program we would be demonstrating to our people what we meant and what we mean in the 16th Assembly priorities. When people choose to build their own log home, it will be strengthening the awareness of everyone's northern identity. If these homes are heated by wood or woodchips, our communities would be more sustainable and we would be advancing alternative energy methods. We would be walking our talk. We have a very young population in the Sahtu. Constructing log cabins in our communities would give extreme value to those who decide to build their own homes.

Building a log cabin or home is a great learning experience, Mr. Speaker. For example, Mr. Speaker, I was approached by Colville Lake Chief Kochon and he is looking forward to having log homes built in Colville Lake for his people. He would like to see some indication of getting a green light from the NWT Corporation so they can get their chainsaws going.

Mr. Speaker, like the song I heard by the Barenaked Ladies, if I had a million dollars I would buy a log house package for each willing family to build their own home in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Member for Nahanni, Mr. Menicoche.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOUSING IN NAHANNI BUTTE

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about housing in Nahanni Butte. Almost every house in Nahanni Butte is privately owned. In 2004 the NWT Community Housing Survey indicated that 40 percent of the households were in core need. Many of the homeowners have problems with the physical structure of their house, but cannot afford to pay for the repairs. In 2008 the NWT Housing Corporation responded to these homeowners' needs and proceeded to arrange for the completion of renovations and much needed repairs.

Nahanni Butte residents were very pleased. The NWT Housing Corporation Assistance Program provided funds to renovate the homes and the renovations were to take place last winter. The renovations did get underway but, unfortunately, due to a number of different reasons, the work was incomplete. Although residents were happy that the work was begun, it needs to be finished. Residents have directed their chief and me to see that these repairs continue. The homeowners should be living in the homes that meet acceptable levels of health and safety.

Mr. Speaker, this work needs to be finished for the comfort and safety of the families, single parents and elder households of Nahanni Butte. They have been waiting a long time to have their needs addressed. Once the project is completed, we will need to continue to concentrate on new and future housing projects.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Housing at the appropriate time. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak today about the Deh Cho Bridge project. This project, pegged at \$165 million, is slated to cost the Government of the Northwest Territories \$4 million per year indexed every year for the next 35 years.

Mr. Speaker, in yesterday's question period I had a number of questions to the Minister of Transportation regarding the current and future

disposition of this project. The most alarming issue was the fact that even though piers are in the water and close to \$40 million has been spent to date, there is still no firm design for this bridge. How is it possible for a construction company to put a fixed price on a massive piece of public infrastructure like a bridge across the Mackenzie River with no firm design? How or why would any government agree to this so-called fixed price?

Mr. Speaker, Members who were here during the 14th Assembly will recall what changes in design can cost the government. All we have to do is look back at the construction of North Slave Correctional Centre, with the many design changes and the 40 percent over budget attributable mostly to design changes.

Yesterday during question period I asked the Minister if the Government of the Northwest Territories and Department of Transportation had done due diligence on the bridge design prior to signing the Concession Agreement. The response I received from the Minister was, and I quote from unedited Hansard, page 49, "I think the project has followed all the rules and regulations up to now." He continues on, "There may have been, could have had and should have maybe had this all signed off prior to the project starting."

As the Minister and government are well aware, I've had some serious concerns about the process that allowed a concession agreement to be signed in secret and on a Friday afternoon three days prior to the last election in 2007. In response to questions on the bridge project, former Premier Joe Handley stated as far back as March 25th, 2004, in Hansard page 305, "The design for the bridge is being finalized." And on May 26th, 2004, page 540 of Hansard: "The Deh Cho Bridge Corporation have, to my knowledge, basically finished the design for the bridge and we are awaiting for cost estimates from them and expect to have those estimates, based on the design they have..." Again, this was five years ago.

Then there's this one from page 546 of Hansard: "It is one that the design is a very serious issue, and one that I assure the Member that we'll be as thorough as we possibly can in reviewing the design that is put forward by the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation."

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

MR. RAMSAY: It is evident that this review of the design did not happen prior to the Government of the Northwest Territories entering into the Concession Agreement. Even the current Minister of Transportation got into the mix on February 28th, 2005, page 1612 of Hansard, "The design has been worked on for some time now. It's down to a couple

of small issues." Well, obviously there are more than just a couple of small issues outstanding as there still remains no design on a \$165 million bridge that this government signed up on.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ARCTIC ENERGY ALLIANCE

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to talk about making sure that good energy saving ideas are turned into action. The Arctic Energy Alliance is a not-for-profit society with the goal to help communities, consumers, producers, regulators, and policymakers to work together to reduce the costs and environmental impacts of energy and the utility services in the Northwest Territories.

We all know far too well about the high energy costs and the concerns around the world regarding climate change which have made reducing energy a top priority for many. My concerns today are that everyday people who need assistance to turn energy saving ideas into reality, hit a wall because there seems to be a gap in the system that is unfunded that turns ideas into action.

Any Northerner can pick up a brochure and learn about solar water heaters that could reduce their energy costs at home. To make the ideas real, that person likely needs some practical assistance with those changes. The Arctic Energy Alliance is funded to provide those ideas and they do that very well. But that's where the funding ends. With that, their goal of translating that into action seems to hit a brick wall. They need the resources to do this.

Another hurdle some of our consumers have is the fact that some of our NWT trades contractors may not have enough experience in helping them bridge those ideas of technology into action. Therefore, people are unsure, and certainly and understandably nervous, that are these good ideas going to translate into results.

If you're a business, there are no programs to be able to turn these ideas into results. Yet, again, a funding gap and a brick wall.

I don't think all is lost because we could fill those funding gaps if our partners such as Environment, Housing Corporation, Public Works, MACA, as well as others could come together to find a way to bridge those gaps by giving them resources to provide that practical experience and translate them into results.

Whether you're an everyday person or a small business, progressive changes need to be addressed through their funding source and delivery mechanisms. All the best energy efficiency

ideas do nothing without the support to translate them into real results.

I'll have questions for the environment Minister later today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
TERRITORIAL TRACK AND FIELD
CHAMPIONSHIPS IN HAY RIVER

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Spring is here and again this year the Territorial Track and Field Championships will take place in Hay River. I just wanted to use my Member's statement today to once again recognize all of the workers, volunteers in Hay River, who every year put so much effort into preparing the grounds and welcoming these young people into our community for this exciting event.

I have heard, and I'm not positive, but the number of participants grows every year. This year I heard that it's up to 1,300.

---Applause

For a small town like Hay River to host an event like this is remarkable. Of course, we couldn't do it without the folks who put the effort into getting their students there. It will be amazing tonight again as the teams from schools large and small parade into the arena for the opening ceremonies. It's an exciting time. I wish them good weather and good luck, and I hope they have a lot of fun.

Again, thank you so much to the volunteers. This year noted in absence, of course, will be someone who was such a huge proponent and supporter of the NWT Track and Field Championships who recently was recognized as Citizen of the Year and has since passed away, and that is John Ashcroft. I wanted to mention that because this will be the first Track and Field Championship without his assistance and I'm sure he will be absolutely sorely missed.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ACCOMPLISHMENT OF MONFWI RESIDENTS

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to highlight just some of the outstanding Tlicho citizens from the Monfwi riding. They are true examples of the kind of role models that we must recognize and support so others will follow.

Adolphus Nitsiza from Behchoko, one of the 14 minor hockey volunteers across Canada named as

RBC Local Hockey Hero on May 11th 2009. This award is based on behind the scenes work to make hockey better across the country for people in the communities. Adolphus has always gone out of his way to strengthen the community recreation spirit. Ever since the sportsplex shut down in Behchoko, he has taken it upon himself to organize the junior hockey opportunities. He drove the kids to Yellowknife on a weekly basis, even on weekends, so they could have the opportunity to play hockey and other sports that the community does not have. As a result of this award, RBC will donate funding towards a Behchoko hockey program and give Adolphus and 20 others opportunities to carry the Olympic Torch for the 2010 Olympics.

Another individual that's worth mentioning is Corporal John Paul Rabesca. Now here is a true soldier, Tlicho soldier, honoured to serve his community and country. John Paul recently completed his military training as an armoured crewman and is stationed in Edmonton.

These two individuals clearly show what it's like to achieve a goal.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to recognize my cousins Linda Wood and Hazel Lyttle, and their friend Carol Prouse.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'm pleased to recognize my constituency assistant from Fort Simpson, Ms. Pearl Norwegian, who is in the gallery this afternoon. She's assisting me in Yellowknife this week and a very warm welcome to her in the Leg. this week.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: I'd like to welcome Mr. Saturday Night Request Show, Mr. Les Carpenter, to the gallery.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: I'd like to recognize a constituent, Ms. Linda Wood, her sister Hazel Lyttle, and their friend Carol Prouse, as well, that are in the House today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. It gives me great pleasure to recognize in the gallery today my new constituency assistant, Ms. Stephanie Fischer, who is with us today. She's over here chaperoning two Pages from Hay River North, Mr.

Dylan Studney and Ryan Shank. They are paging here and I want to welcome them to the Leg. They've been doing a great job all year. All week.

If we've missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the House. It's always a pleasure to have an audience in here. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 402-16(3): YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Homeless youth between the ages of 16 and 19 often fall through the cracks of our existing programs. Too old for non-voluntary support under the Child and Family Services Act and too young for income support, they have to rely on themselves to get a roof over their heads. Fortunately there are committed NGOs who try to help. Unfortunately, they can only go so far with limited funds. My question for the Minister is: What is being done to address this gap in these services? What is being done to support these youth?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of things that the government does do to provide support to these youth. I've visited the NGOs that the Member referred to. The Department of Health and Social Services funds a lot of their funding.

I think it's important to know that those older youth between 16 and 19, if they do work with social workers, they have the option of continuing on with the plan that they might have had in foster care. A lot of it involves independent living. They can choose a family that they would like to live with, especially if they want to continue to live with the family that they had before. They can also choose to speak with social workers about getting access to treatment.

As the Member knows, the government has made a number of steps over the last couple of years to expand our youth shelter programs outside of Yellowknife because...and we are providing youth cafes and all kinds of gathering opportunities in communities like Providence, Behchoko...I can't remember all the names. I think we've announced that. We are expanding those programs.

MR. ABERNETHY: I'd really like to thank the Minister for that response. I know there is an awful

lot going on and I'm happy to see that. With respect to my question I was talking more about the non-voluntary support. Those individuals who, for any number of reasons, don't feel comfortable, are still out there on the streets. Yes, there are NGOs that are doing an awful lot of work. I still think there is room for this government to try and fill those gaps for those non-voluntary people a bit more. I don't think it's just a Department of Health and Social Services' issue. I think it does need to be a partnership between Education and Health and Social Services. My question to the Minister is: Can the Minister give me a bit of an outline of the types of things that the two departments are doing in cooperation and collaboration to fill this gap?

HON. SANDY LEE: I do agree with the Member that this is a gap that needs to be addressed. This is something that has been under discussion in this House, as well as the fact that it is a national issue, because nationally it is recognized as a gap that needs to be addressed. I can advise the Member that in the Minister's Action Plan for Health and Social Services, which we are consulting with the committee and outside, we are looking at coming out with transition measures where we can strengthen mentoring and more support work to work with these older youth, understanding that youth between the age of 16 and 19 we need to be giving them options and have them have more say about their environment and living arrangements. But we do recognize that there is more the government can do to support that. We'll be working to strengthen that program and probably do additional funding.

MR. ABERNETHY: Once again thanks to the Minister for that. I'm very pleased to hear all the types of things that the Department of Health and Social Services is doing with respect to this issue. Going back to my question, this government from time to time creates silos and we work within those silos. This particular issue I think there would be a lot of advantage for education and health to work together to try and address these problems because they'd both have a role. Could the Minister tell me what types of things the departments are doing in collaboration with each other to break down those silos in the best interest of youth 16 to 19?

HON. SANDY LEE: The action plan understands, and the work of the Department of Health and Social Services involves often working with other departments. Aurora Oxford House, for example, having the women stay there, that's in collaboration with income security. So wherever we can use the assistance of other government to help, I mean, other departments to help these older youth, make choices for them, their living arrangements, whether it's housing or income security or mentoring. We are looking at strengthening programs to increase programs to teach them life skills. What we want to

do is help them make independent choices as they work toward being 19. I can commit to working with other departments as we move forward on this plan.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

QUESTION 403-16(3):
EVALUATION OF INCOME SUPPORT
PROGRAMS

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Going back to my Member's statement today regarding income support in the communities in all of the Territory, will the government re-evaluate the way income support cheques and amounts are evaluated and distributed and how various government departments deal with the high cost of living in the small and remote communities?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Within the income security area we have made some changes in the past to meet the standards of the high cost of living in the communities. We continue to make changes to meet the needs of the communities. At the same time, we continue to work with the committee that's been established to reduce the cost of living. It's under the leadership of Ms. Lee. Certainly we can continue to work in that area and have a clear dialogue about how to reduce the high cost of living specifically in the Member's riding. We're fully aware of that and within our income security area, as I stated earlier, we make changes every now and then based on the evaluation of the program itself.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Will this government commit to assisting community governments, organizations, and residents in the communities with no food bank or support services so no child or family goes hungry in this Territory?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I certainly appreciate the Member giving us some feedback from the communities' perspectives because those are important discussions we are having within the committee that I've just highlighted, the committee that's responsible for reducing the cost of living. Those are the discussions that we're having. Whether it be reducing the cost of living in communities, how can we go about that area? Not only that, but the food basket area and various other programs that we deliver at the community level. I appreciate Members giving us input into certain areas that we need to improve on. We're clearly working on those areas.

MR. JACOBSON: I may not agree with that, but recognize that this government reviews the cost of

healthy living in the small, remote communities periodically, but I don't agree with how the costs are reviewed. Will this government revise measures on how the cost of living in small, remote communities can be recalculated?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: The last time we made changes to our income security area was recommendations that came down from community representatives that deal with communities that are in a high cost of living. Not only that, but the input from the Members, due to the fact that we made changes to our program, but there's always room for improvement as well. We're always constantly making changes to our policies and certainly there is, Members are involved with the isolation costs, the committee itself. So certainly they would like to hear their input and Members around the table as well. We continue to strive for the betterment of the community programming.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: I really hope this committee that the Minister's speaking about could meet sooner than later, because we have people in our communities who are going hungry. It's not right. Will the Minister commit to do a community tour of my Nunakput communities?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Yes, certainly we'll take those into consideration. There have been Ministers going into Members' ridings. The committee I was referring to is, of course, reducing cost of living and also the rural communities, the small communities that Members are involved with. Certainly there's been a lot of discussion in that area. We're certainly looking forward to the input of those Members and how we can change our program that will reflect on the high cost of living along with working with the committee that's leading the task as well. Certainly those are important discussions that we're having today and certainly take those forward with our consultation.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 404-16(3):
NWT ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITIES
RESOLUTIONS

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I mentioned in one of my Member's statements earlier this week that I was privileged to attend the NWT Association of Communities annual general meeting and conference in Inuvik. At that meeting, during the business part of their meeting, the association passed some 20 resolutions; 19, actually, I think. My questions today are addressed to Premier Roland and I'd like to first ask the Premier, because I know he has received a copy of these resolutions as have I, I'd like to ask the

Premier what action will be taken by this government or by himself in regards to the NWT Association of Communities resolutions.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did indeed receive correspondence from the president of the Association of Communities. I have forwarded that to all departments so that we can come back with a joint response to the letter that I received.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to Premier Roland for that comment. I guess I would hope for a little bit more specifics, but I guess we'll have to wait and see. Many of these, I shouldn't say many; some of these resolutions include funding requests. I'd like to know from the Premier whether or not the funding requests that are contained in the resolutions that do have a funding request, will those requests be considered in the development of business plans for the 2010-2011 budget?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: There are a number of different levels; the Member is correct. Some do require some commitment towards funding. Others are just the way we do business, carry out. So we'll have to look at what we can't do in the short term in the sense of implementing some of the change. Others, when it comes to actual business plan, the timing of that we would work with Municipal and Community Affairs, who would submit their budget requests in areas whether it's new initiatives or forced growth areas for communities. Work on that basis to see what comes forward.

MS. BISARO: I want to highlight a couple of resolutions. One of them, actually two resolutions reference the Mackenzie Valley Highway. Basically the resolution stated that we need to get on with it, so to speak. I'd like to know from the Premier whether or not he thinks the power and the urgency behind these two resolutions from the NWTAC, whether or not this government can use it as some leverage or some push to get the federal government to move on the Mackenzie Valley Highway file.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: That motion, I believe it's the 20th motion from the organization, is indeed helpful for us. The more people we have saying the same things, the better for us when we build our business case. I know that the regional leadership as well have spoken to that and support this initiative. We've just received correspondence from the Gwich'in Tribal Council president as well that flows along with this to see how we can work together to come forward with the business case, I would say. So a motion like this is supportive and we hope to include more like this as we build our business case.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Premier, thank you for that explanation. I think he knows I am totally in support of a Mackenzie Valley Highway project. The more we can get it going, the sooner the better.

One other resolution I wanted to mention is the resolution that talks about the protection of NWT waters from oil sands developments. It asks the GNWT to ask the Government of Alberta to halt new oil sands approval until it negotiates an enforceable transboundary water agreement with the NWT. My question to the Premier is whether or not he will commit to forward that message on behalf of the NWTAC to the Government of Alberta.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: We're already engaged in a process with Alberta, with B.C., Saskatchewan, our neighbours in this area, and Minister Miltenberger is also involved and engaged in this area when it comes to the water issues with regional leadership here in the Territories, trying to secure that new agreement and have the federal government step up their mandate in this area. So we're engaged in this area and we'll continue to pursue an agreement from my level with the Premier of Alberta. We'll engage at that level to work out a solution that works for us in the sense of having that agreement move forward.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

QUESTION 405-16(3):
RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Premier and is in regard to my Member's statement. I think it's so important that this government realizes it's probably more urgent that the government involves itself in the communities that basically are struggling to deliver programs and services, from policing programs to health care services, and also in regard to being able to recruit and retain professionals in our community from lack of staff housing. The challenges are big and bad in a lot of our communities. A lot of times we approve budgets in this House. Great intentions, a lot of money goes out the door. At the end of the day those services are not delivered in our communities because we either don't have a police officer, a nurse, lack of teachers.

I'd like to ask the Premier, in light of the challenges we face in our smaller communities, if the government could very seriously consider looking at reframing some of these dollars so that they do go into the communities and expend it where they're

supposed to and not get bottlenecked at the regional hospital or regional education system and not being able to deliver because of these capacity issues we're facing from housing to a lack of police services or nursing services or professionals being able to deliver these programs. I'd like to ask the Premier if he would consider looking at that type of gesture in regard to assisting our communities to deliver programs and services.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The area of transfers of authorities, programs, devolving responsibilities is something that we're definitely engaged in. We have many examples of where we've tried to do it. Some programs have been handed back to the Government of the Northwest Territories, because communities could not, for their own capacity issues, take on the additional programs or attract professionals to take certain positions. We find that even from within the Government of the Northwest Territories, difficulty in finding the right solution for our communities. We are engaged. We do look at that. It is part of, for example, as well, the negotiations around self-government, depending on what the authorities are and programs that region and the self-government are looking to take over. There are a number of fronts where we are involved looking at trying to make the best use of the dollars and trying to get the programs to the communities in those cases.

We are challenged across the Territory. There are a number of fronts we are involved with and will continue to be involved with to try to make sure we get the programs out to communities and best results for people in those communities. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest challenges is strictly with infrastructure, not having adequate staff housing in our communities, not having the office space in our communities to accommodate mental health workers, alcohol and drug workers and even doctors, in some cases, because they have no place to stay. I think the big issue is something that the Minister of Justice has been trying to deal with, is policing in small communities that don't have policing because they don't have a police station or they don't have a building to work out of. I would like to ask the Premier again, realizing that these infrastructure challenges are in our communities, I think that this government should do everything it can to ensure that the resources are there, to ensure those infrastructures are on the ground so we can deliver programs and services and not continue to use that as an excuse why we can't deliver in our communities.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, we don't come up with excuses why we can't do things. We are trying to do things. Our attitude of can-do is

sometimes inhibited by the availability of programs, who is in control of the dollars. For example, we have started to expand our policing services in the communities, working with the federal government in establishing two-man facilities, but some of their criteria is also putting some pressure on us on our existing operations. We continue to work on expansion, for example of policing services which then as well allows us to look at increased nursing in some of our other communities as well. There are a number of fronts where we are trying to expand our services into the communities, around infrastructure, around programming, but we are also hit up against the wall on what types of requirements are placed on us as to the level of service we can produce. But we have engaged in, for example, the policing end and will continue to do so to try to expand those services in working with the federal government in that key area. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, again, this government approves dollars so we can approve programs and services for us in the Northwest Territories. As mentioned, the shop program in trying to expand that into our schools. We have K to 12 in the majority of our communities now. A lot of our schools don't have the capacity to deliver that program. We can give them the money but they don't have a shop. Again, that is the type of thing I am talking about by ensuring that they have the physical ability to deliver, not just the financial ability. Again, that is one of the areas I think we have to seriously look at. We talk about physical education and other things, putting more money into the Department of Education, giving them more resources and try to improve the quality of services in our communities. I want to ask the Premier again, in regards to realizing that we are looking at trying to improve programs and services but yet we do not have the physical structures to deliver shop programs and other programs in our communities because our schools were not designed that way. There is going to have to be some investment. I would like to ask the Premier if he would seriously look at the possibility of putting shop programs in our communities by way of additional expansion of our schools.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, I think the Member has used another example of where as governments were previous to ourselves and as we as the 16th Assembly have been working to expand our services in the communities. Grade extensions is an example of that where we used to have the regional schools and the facilities of that nature. We have now reached back in the communities and that is one of the areas where parents have not even asked to send their students back to a regional facility because they feel that there are more opportunities at those facilities. The Member is right; schools were designed in a certain way because they didn't have that level of programming.

Our challenge is, as we extend the grades, there is more demand for more of the courses and then to try to come up with the resources to do that. It would be an Assembly decision to expand to that level of programming in the communities. It means taking some dollars from another area of expenditures we are making now and reinvesting it. If that is the will of the Members of this Assembly, that is something we would have to look at and take up seriously. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Your final, short supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it is the will of this House, but also the government has to. Where there is a will, there is a way. I believe there is a way if we can get the government on board. You guys are the ones that basically have the pen in hand. I think it is important that you find ways of ensuring these programs and services can be delivered and have the financial and physical capacity to do it. I would like to ask the Premier to seriously consider any financial decisions we make in this House. At the end of the day, it has to be able to be delivered in all communities in the Northwest Territories physically and practically. More importantly, the will has to be there for this government. Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, as we begin our next round of planning for business plans, all Members of this Assembly are involved in that planning and give direction to Ministers and departments as to what areas we should put more priority on. What it will come down to is, do we have the dollars to expand all of our services at a level that is expected in every one of our communities? For example, we have differences between our communities that are tax-based and some that are in the general taxation area. They have a level of services that are higher than some communities, because the individuals who choose to live in those communities pay a higher level of taxes so they can get that level of service.

We have started the work along the way with our general taxation area, giving them more authority and taxation authority so that they can, as well, go into that area. The problem is they stay in much smaller communities and they don't have the population to support some of these bigger areas.

Our challenge overall, as Members are aware, is we have had to tighten our belts as a government. The future isn't any different. We are going to have to continue to manage the growth of government and come up with the best value of investment we can. We are trying to do that even though we have had to tighten our belts as we invest some dollars. That is the challenge to this Assembly as a whole, not just as Cabinet. If we want to change that, then, as the Member said, if there is a will, there is a way.

The will has to come from this Assembly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

QUESTION 406-16(3):
RECREATION FACILITIES FOR
TU NEDHE YOUTH

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I talked about the need for a youth centre in Lutselk'e. The youth have spoken. Now we have to listen. I have questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, I understand the youth centre movement has acquired an old house and will receive financial assistance from the band to do some minor renovations. The youth, this place is too small for their needs. Can the Minister advise me what the current MACA policy is with respect to youth centres in those communities which do not have municipal governments and has a First Nation government only? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope the youth of Tu Nedhe can appreciate the persistence their MLA has shown with bringing their youth issues forward all the time. As far as the policy goes, Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure if we have a policy in place. What I do know, Mr. Speaker, is that a lot of the communities with the community capacity building money that was allocated to them a few years ago, have begun to invest that into youth centres, youth programs. A lot of the money went to the youth.

As far as if we have a policy and doing the youth centres in the community, again I will go back to an argument that I continue to make that it is a community decision with the capital infrastructure dollars that we allocate to them. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for that response. The youth and the community need this government to support the initiative. There is not enough money in the capacity building for them to divert to build a full functioning youth centre for the community. Will the Minister commit to working with me and the community of Lutselk'e, getting the wheels in motion for a proper, adequate youth centre for the community? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, yes, I will commit to working with the Member but I will also commit that the department will work with the community to identify their capital needs to see where they could fit the youth centre into their capital infrastructure program. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, as mentioned, the youth are able to acquire a facility to have a makeshift youth centre and you got some assistance from the band. Will the Minister commit to providing some funding from the department to assist the youth in getting the current and temporary youth centre up and running? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the money that is allocated for youth centres across the Northwest Territories has doubled in this current budget to \$500,000 from \$250,000 last year. If the community of Lutselk'e requires funding for their community, like all of the communities, they would have to put in an application and then the money is divvied up by the number of applications they got. Last year, for example, all of the youth centres got exactly the same amount of funding. I am sure that is the way the program will work again this year. I would encourage the community of Lutselk'e to put an application in for the youth centre funding, and then the department will look at it from there. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a proposal from the youth worker in Lutselk'e. I am pleased to hear the Minister would be looking at the possibility of looking at some capital for the upcoming business plan review. Will the Minister use that proposal once we have the numbers in place, during the business plan review? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, in response to the question yesterday, I quoted the amount of money that a community was getting for capital infrastructure. Lutselk'e is another prime example of a band community that, once they form a corporation, will be able to get two years' worth of capital funding. As soon as that is done and I think it works out to \$1.6 million for the community. As far as the proposal goes, I would be willing to take that proposal, bring it to the department so when they go to work with the community of Lutselk'e to decide on how they are going to spend that \$1.6 million, they can look at the proposal that the community brought forward. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

QUESTION 407-16(3):
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some questions today for the Minister of Transportation again pertaining to the Deh Cho Bridge project. Again, I am at a loss as to understand how or why a government could sign a concession agreement on \$160 million project without a firm design on that bridge. Even though --

and I mentioned in my Member's statement numerous times over the past five years and questions to the former Premier and former Ministers and many other Cabinet Ministers over the years -- all have said the design was coming, it was being finalized, here we are \$40 million into the project. There are piers in the water and there is still no design, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister how it is that the government could sign onto a \$160 million project without a firm design on a bridge like this? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This question was raised yesterday. At the time I indicated that we would all agree that the best case scenario would have the project sign off the design right up front. That was not the situation. Time and capacity didn't allow the final design as it requires very rigorous testing to be done on it. So all parties agreed that that would be done as we move forward. That is currently the situation. There has been, up to now, two reviews on the design completed. This is the final review. It is going to be done by a very competent firm that the Bridge Corporation has hired. We expect them to have the results by sometime this summer or in the fall.

Mr. Speaker, the Member is right. We have spent close to \$40 million which represents just about 25 percent of the project. We are 25 percent completed. As we move forward, we expect to spend another 25 percent of the budget this coming summer. By the end of December, we expect to have 50 percent of the project done. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, going forward, I am just wondering, because there is no firm design today, what our financial liability and risk exposure is in this project going forward without a design, Mr. Speaker, whether the Minister could comment on that. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Member keeps indicating there is no design. There is a design. There has been a design for a number of months and over the last couple of years it has been worked on. It requires a final sign-off and we are expecting those results to come back. That will indicate whether there requires major or minor changes or everything is fine. Until we see those numbers, it is pretty hard to make the comment. I know the Member is expecting for us to indicate that maybe it would cost more, but we don't have anything to point to that at this time. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, is there anything written in a contract or agreement with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation that would have seen the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation complete the design work prior to us having already sunk \$40 million into the

project, Mr. Speaker? Was there a date assigned to the completion of that design work? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I would have to go and see if there was an actual date. I don't believe so. From the top of my head, I don't believe there is an actual date. I know there was a requirement and an agreement by both parties that this design, a design that is required by the bridge code for all their designs and all the components of a design to pass some very rigorous testing to be done. That is being undertaken right now. We expect to see the results hopefully fairly soon. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Your final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the work that is currently underway and I guess the tests that are out there on the design of the bridge, can the Minister again today commit to the fact that this bridge is going to be constructed at a maximum price of \$165 million? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, that was the agreement that was signed. We still are expecting to meet those overall budget targets, overall budget numbers. We are expecting to see all the final results of the design review. We will have a better, firmer schedule or work plan if there are any changes to it. But we are targeting and our goal is to meet that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 408-16(3):
HOUSING ISSUES IN NAHANNI BUTTE

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister of NWT Housing Corporation some questions with regard to the housing initiative in Nahanni Butte. It seems to have been stalled. Residents have been contacting my office as well as the chief from the community as to what is going to be the next steps to completing and delivering the Housing Repair and Renovation Program for the community of Nahanni Butte. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are working with the community. We had six clients last year with a contract for repairs. There were some difficulties and challenges that we weren't able to fill. There were certain obligations. We have gone back and our district office is in the process of completing the inspections. We will be meeting next week with the contractors. We will be moving forward with the intention of completing all of these units for the end of this summer. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'm pleased to see that the corporation continues to move forward with the repairs. Just as an illustration, I have one resident willing to move into his incomplete home. He's saying I know the funding is not done, but I cannot wait any longer, I'm going to move into this unit. To his eyes, Mr. Speaker, the Housing Corporation is moving so slow that he just cannot wait anymore, but if there's a solution and if the Minister can commit to the residents that certainly this summer those six repairs will be indeed completed. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we certainly don't want to have, or encourage anybody to, move into a unit that's not complete. It would put us, or at least the contractor, into a liability situation and it's not something we want to see. We completely intend to have all the units completed this summer. We are actually moving forward on some of the new infrastructure that will be going into the community. Over the last winter, we did a gravel haul and have the gravel pads ready for some of the units that will be there. So we expect to do a lot better this coming summer as we ran into some challenges last year. But certainly we'll commit to the Member that we'll do everything within our authority and ability to complete all these units. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Is it the case where some of the material is not yet in the community and do they have to look at expecting a barge delivery of materials? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Member is asking me some very detailed questions about delivery of these housing units and I'm not up to the details of what's happening in every community. I can say to the Member, though, that the house will be started this year. I'm not sure how the materials are getting there. We expect the house to be finished by December of this year and that's for both units that fall under the new construction. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Your final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just one final note on the delivery of programming in Nahanni Butte, if the Minister's office can provide an analysis of exactly what happened and advise me and the community of it, just to ensure that this type of thing doesn't happen again and how they're willing to mitigate it or take care of an issue like that. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we know exactly what happened last year. It's not something I want to share here on the floor of this House, Mr. Speaker, but we can provide that once we have an ability to sit down with the Member and the leadership of his community. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 409-16(3):
ARCTIC ENERGY ALLIANCE

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement today I talked about turning ideas into action and I was referring to energy efficiency programs out there and the great advice we get over at the Arctic Energy Alliance. We have a great bank of knowledge and the very helpful staff there, but the problem in some cases in even talking to them and even talking to people on the street and what they hear is they get these bright ideas, but they can't transfer them from ideas into practical use. So, Mr. Speaker, it's a resource issue about turning these ideas into action.

So, Mr. Speaker, my question will be directed to the Minister of Environment because I think he could really focus in on the multi departments that come in together in partnership and I certainly hope he'd lead by example, but certainly lead the other departments in the direction that we need to go. So, Mr. Speaker, my question, therefore, is: Would the Minister be willing to look into resourcing the Arctic Energy Alliance properly so they can help turn these great energy efficiency ideas into actual real actions that show and deliver results? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we currently provide funding to the Arctic Energy Alliance. We also fund a whole host of conservation and rebate programs. In addition, we just passed a budget in this House where we're going to be spending about \$16 million this coming year in 2009-10 to better resource alternative energy initiatives across the board, including the conservation programs. For this year, in addition to the funding we already give them, there's an additional \$500,000 to go into the Arctic Energy Alliance to increase their presence across the North. So almost \$17 million in addition to the funding that's already in the budget and we're going to cover the whole range from mini-hydro, rebate programs, biomass, wind energy, geothermal, extending power lines. I don't think anybody could say that we're not putting money into this particular very important area. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: The Minister continues to demonstrate his talent to circumvent a question in such a fine way. Mr. Speaker, the question goes back to...And it's as simple as this: Would the Minister look at resourcing the Arctic Energy Alliance properly so they can help translate all

those great ideas he just talked about into results, practical results? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, in addition to the money that they're already getting in their budget, we're adding another \$500,000 to their budget. We're putting \$150,000 in to support geothermal; we're putting \$300,000 in to support a community heat; energy efficiency incentives, \$350,000, in addition to the \$500,000 we're going to contribute to the Arctic Energy Alliance. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure how much more the Member would like us to put into this without begging ourselves in other areas. This is a huge commitment and I think that the Member should be standing up congratulating the Assembly for the good decision-making and their wise expenditure of public funds. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Well, I certainly hope the Minister is going to beg for forgiveness in a minute because I can't make the question any simpler than this. I'm not talking about what the programs are offered out there, but maybe that's confusing the Minister in his elderly age, I don't know.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Ohhh.

MR. HAWKINS: So, Mr. Speaker, I'll say the question a little slower for him just in case he missed it. Mr. Speaker, recognizing all those great programs, simply this: Would the Minister look at leading an initiative to make sure that the Arctic Energy Alliance is properly resourced so we can take those fantastic ideas and initiatives created by this Assembly that they're putting money into and turning them into practical real results for everyday people? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Hawkins, in his youthful impetuosity...

---Laughter

...is not listening to the answers. Either that or he does not like the answers. We are putting \$17 million into alternative energy. We are putting \$500,000 more into the Arctic Energy Alliance. We have a whole host of rebate and incentive programs for people to spend and assist people on energy conservation methods; \$17 million, Mr. Speaker, this year, \$60 million over three. I think that's a very, very significant putting the money where the government mouth is. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess with age you just become galvanized. I don't know how to put it any simpler than that. Mr. Speaker, the question really comes down to resourcing properly. No one is criticizing the programs developed and supported through this Minister, through Public Works, through MACA. No one is criticizing that.

Mr. Speaker, the problem out there that exists, which is pretty obvious, which is about transferring those ideas about programs which exist. I mean, you can go to Arctic Energy Alliance and they'll give you a booklet and say here, now go put in a solar hot water panel or they'll give you another piece of paper that says here, wood pellet boiler, but it's the problem of transferring that knowledge, reaching into the great program and turning it into practicality. So, Mr. Speaker, that's the focus I'm after. So, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of ENR look at addressing that problem that's even recognized by the Arctic Energy Alliance? It would make a big, significant difference in implementing those programs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the ink is just recently dry on the budget for 2009-10, a budget that the Member stood up and supported and could not say enough good things about and now he's saying somehow that there are gaps. May I once again remind the Member...I'll give you another one that I didn't mention, \$100,000 for solar power for community swimming pools, just another small idea of the money that we're putting in to work with communities and individuals, businesses. We've got \$9 million put aside for a commercial power subsidy. So, Mr. Speaker, we are there in spades for the people of the Northwest Territories when it comes to alternative energy initiatives. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 410-16(3):
BIOMASS AND FORESTRY

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also would like to ask the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources some questions, particularly about forestry. Residents, we're sort of on a biomass track, which I think has an incredible amount of potential, as I have said before. I think a number of people are excited about it. It has the potential for local economic development and so on. Great potential. However, residents do appreciate that the forests play many roles and they're concerned, knowing that we have slow growing forests, that we don't overdo it and we do have forests that have turnarounds. Well, we don't know what their turnaround is; possibly a couple hundred years or something.

I'd like to ask the Minister, what do we know about the sustainable yield of our forests and their capacity to sustain harvest for biomass heat and power? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we know that of all the forests to be inventoried, we've done about a sixth of what needs to be done. Most of it focused in the Slave River Lowlands and through the Deh Cho with some small areas up the valley. We know that if we're going to focus on regional and community-based biomass strategies and wood pellets and chips, then we're going to have to confirm that and update it. We know that the Member and the MLA for Mackenzie Delta are doing a report based on their trip to Scandinavia to give us their best advice on how they manage forests and how they do things in a way that looks at sustainability within their context. So we're committed to this process. There's some basic information there, but clearly as we move forward at the value-added secondary, there's going to have to be more work done. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate those comments. I'd like to ask the Minister, do we have the expertise within the department and the capacity to actually get this done and provide the assurance that our public will need before we go out and start harvesting our forests? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, we have some capacity, some resources. We have people that do this. They have other parts of their job as well, but clearly as we lay out our Biomass Strategy, we're going to have to work to make sure that we have the resources to get the baseline information so that we can do our best planning and we're going to have to look at the department and how we can readjust to meet those demands to get that information. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Again, I'd like to impress on the Members that we have some real opportunities that are right here now. We're receiving proposals, there's expertise in the North to get some of these biomass programs on the ground. These things take time, studies of course and their sustainability of harvest. So can I be assured that some of the resources that the Minister has spoken briefly about with my colleague explaining what I hope we all know about the Arctic Energy Alliance doubling its budget this year, that those dollars are available to start work, an aggressive level of work, on proving up the sustainability of harvest for our forests? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, we have \$1 million earmarked this year in addition to the other programs that are there to encourage people to switch over to more energy-efficient or wood pellet technology, \$1 million to advance the work with the Biomass Strategy we're hoping to pilot in one community. We have millions put aside

into retrofits for government buildings to get them onto biomass as well. So the commitment is there and we look forward to working with the Climate Change Committee and the other appropriate committees, the Minister of the Energy Coordinating Committee, to advance all these initiatives on the very many fronts that are on the move here. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that there have been a number of inventories done on community forests, at least a few, but to my knowledge it has not been taken to the point where we can actually rest assured that the harvest will be done in a sustainable basis. Our residents are demanding this. Can the Minister assure us that this work has started or will start very quickly and aggressively? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the work has been undertaken and is ongoing. As I indicated, it's about a sixth of the total mass of the Boreal Forest that has been inventoried, most of it up into the Slave River Lowlands through the Dehcho and up the valley a bit. We recognize that around the communities if we're going to do the Biomass Strategy in conjunction with the Fire Smart Program to help protect communities from wildfire, that we have an opportunity here to set up belts, protection belts that would also be belts where the wood could be harvested on a sustainable basis. So there's going to be a different focus.

This Biomass Strategy is going to be new. Forest inventory in the past was for occasional firewood gathering, it was for larger-term lumbering and sustainability in that area. So clearly the Biomass Strategy is going to help change that focus, and that strategy will help us plan out the steps necessary to do it the appropriate way. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member from the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 411-16(3):

LOG HOME CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, upon reviewing the 16th Legislative Assembly's goals and strategic initiative, I wanted to ask the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation, in terms of supporting our goals here in the Legislative Assembly, if there's any type of plans in the Housing Corporation to look at a pilot program for log homes that I understand could be an avenue that could be considered by his department for communities?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we've, in the last while, worked very closely with the Members of this House to look at the issues in the area of housing and delivery of housing to our residents across the Northwest Territories. We've made a number of changes and we're still working on many of the changes that need to be brought forward; more affordable housing in the communities is one area and designing houses that could be utilized by people that are out on a trapline that would require leaving their unit for some time. A house that could be heated with a woodstove and have very basic facilities in it was something that was brought forward. We have moved forward with that design. We plan to have some pilot units put in the communities this year. Log housing was also raised. We've been looking at a number of the units that were built over the years. I'm still not convinced that we can build these units cost effectively and also meet the EnerGuide 80 rating that we have in place. So we're not in a position to move forward for this coming construction year with any log units. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister if he could go back to his Cabinet and, as the Premier said, have a "can do" attitude and look at possibilities in the future years, not this year, next year, have that "can do" attitude. Can we build several log homes for communities like Colville Lake or Nahanni Butte that could prove to the Minister that this could get done? I think this type of initiative in our communities would be very productive. I think we can do it. I think we need to strengthen our ability to have belief in our people. We have some really good log builders in the Northwest Territories. Would the Minister be willing to make a commitment to the people in the North that he will take this type of initiative back to Cabinet and see how they can do it? Build log homes in some of the communities that make sense, who are traditionally in that type of environment where they do trapping the majority of their life.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I do have the "can do" attitude. Just on this initiative, no can do.

---Laughter

As I indicated, this is not something we're ready to move forward on. We've looked at many of the initiatives that have been worked on for log units. Almost every one of them has come in over budget; in some cases, three to four times higher than what the budget was actually set. We still haven't seen a design that meets the EnerGuide 80 rating. In order for this to be successful and meet the principles of a basic unit program, it has to do both. We can't move forward with a basic unit if it falls, exceeds

the threshold set for forgivable mortgages. That's going to be very difficult. If the house is not energy efficient, then it really defeats the purpose.

We have designs ready to go for stick built. We'll continue to look at this. If the Member has any suggestions or any proposals that he would like to bring forward, we will consider it. There are other Members who have indicated and are bringing proposals and designs for us to consider. For this construction season, we don't have a design. We don't have a program that will fit the bill and we can't move forward with any log units for this year.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The time for question period has expired; however, I will allow the Member a supplementary question. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I'm hearing is that it's a "no-can-do" attitude on this initiative. There's no way. So what I'm asking the Minister and this Cabinet is: Are they ready to really dig deep, look into an issue in terms of building a log home in one of the small communities? Can they dig deep?

For me, it seems that they're not digging deep enough in terms of how can we build. Our grandfathers did it. Our fathers did it. They've done it in the bush. There's a way there. I'm asking the Minister to look further in terms of how can we build a simple log house in our small communities for our people. Very simple, yet we seem to be stopped by certain codes and regulations. I understand that. I think there's a way around that if we put our focus on it. Will the Minister be able to do that; roll up his sleeves with my people to sit down and say can we build a log house?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: My sleeves have been rolled up for some time. Anytime the Member wants to sit down and talk about programs that he uses with success, we have the history on all the projects in his riding and other ridings. We can give him the cost breakdown. The reality is we can't do any units in log building this year. We don't have a design. We don't have all the business case to bring forward to the federal government where we are obtaining our funding or the bulk of our funding. We would need to be convinced that it's efficient, it's cost efficient also, and energy efficient. I'm not saying that we can't do it in the future. It's just this construction year, along with everything else that we have on the go, we are probably not going to be in a position to do any log units. But I'll be glad to continue to visit. We haven't moved away from it. We just need to dig a little deeper, as the Member has indicated, to see what can work and how we can do it. But that would be for the next fiscal year.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Your final, short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am grateful for the Minister's response in terms of continuing to have an open attitude in terms of looking at what can get done in terms of building a log house. I've built a log house in Tulita. People have built log houses in the Sahtu region. We know the package. So I would appreciate if the Minister would make a commitment to his staff in the Sahtu region to sit down with some of the members in the Sahtu, to sit down realistically to price out what it costs to build a log home. Would the Minister make that commitment to the leadership in the Sahtu?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Of course we'd be willing to talk to whoever is interested to talk to us about construction of log units. We have already a number of Members that have raised and indicated that they wanted to have that discussion. We're more than willing to do that. If the Member has some people in his riding that he wants to set us up for discussion with, we'd be pleased to follow up on that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 55-16(3):
MINISTERIAL BENEFITS POLICIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 56-16(3):
BENEFITS PAID TO MINISTERS UNDER
THE MINISTERIAL BENEFITS POLICIES

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following two documents entitled Ministerial Benefits Policies and The Report Respecting Benefits Paid to Ministers under the Ministerial Benefits Policies for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31st, 2009.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

TABLED DOCUMENT 57-16(3):
GOOD BUILDING PRACTICE FOR NORTHERN
FACILITIES – SECOND EDITION, 2009

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I wish to table the following document entitled Good Building Practice for Northern Facilities, Second Edition, 2009.

TABLED DOCUMENT 58-16(3):
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY RETIRING
ALLOWANCE FUND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2009

MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to section 21 of the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act, I wish to table the Legislative Assembly's Retiring Allowance Fund Financial Statements for the Year Ended March 31st, 2009.

TABLED DOCUMENT 59-16(3):
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES MLAS' PENSION PLANS FOR THE
FISCAL YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2009

Pursuant to section 21(1) of the Legislative Assembly's Retiring Allowances Act and section 11.1 of the Supplementary Allowances Act, I wish to table the Annual Report of the Northwest Territories MLAs' Pension Plans for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31st, 2009.

TABLED DOCUMENT 60-16(3):
ANNUAL REPORT RESPECTING MEMBERS'
INDEMNITIES AND ALLOWANCES FOR THE
FISCAL YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2009

Pursuant to section 35(a), (b), and (c) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the Annual Report Respecting Members' Indemnities and Allowances for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31st, 2009.

TABLED DOCUMENT 61-16(3):
AMENDMENTS TO SCHEDULE C OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE
COUNCIL ACT – INDEMNITIES AND
ALLOWANCES

In accordance with section 21(3) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I hereby table Amendments to Schedule C of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act - Indemnities and Allowances.

Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

Motions

MOTION 21-16(3):
ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPECIAL COMMITTEE
TO REVIEW THE CHILD AND
FAMILY SERVICES ACT,
CARRIED

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the 16th Legislative Assembly has agreed on a vision of "strong individuals, families, and communities sharing the benefits and

responsibilities of a unified, environmentally sustainable, and prosperous Northwest Territories";

AND WHEREAS the 16th Legislative Assembly has identified a number of priority actions including the promotion of healthy choices and lifestyles, the role of personal and family responsibility and the need to work with families, communities and schools to improve the physical and mental well-being of our youth;

AND WHEREAS the family is the basic unit of society and its well-being and should be supported and promoted;

AND WHEREAS children are entitled to protection from abuse, harm and neglect;

AND WHEREAS the vision of Phase II of the Family Violence Action Plan is "a society where all individuals are safe, respected and valued; where any form of family violence is unacceptable; and where children, women and men have opportunities to reach their full potential";

AND WHEREAS over the past few years Members of the 16th Legislative Assembly and their constituents have voiced concerns regarding child protection apprehension, the discretionary powers of child protection workers and the overall oversight of the NWT child protection regime;

AND WHEREAS 622 Northwest Territories children and youth who are receiving services from the Department of Health and Social Services - children and family services division as of December 3, 2008;

AND WHEREAS parents retain custodial rights for only 43 percent of these children and youth through the use of plan of care, voluntary, and support service agreements;

AND WHEREAS only 52 percent of these children receive services delivered in the home of a parent, a relative or someone the child or youth knew;

AND WHEREAS during fiscal year 2007-2008 there were a total of 56 children and youth supported in residential treatment services out of the Territory;

AND WHEREAS 111 children were apprehended for more than 72 hours in 2008;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories annually expends a significant amount of money on child care programs, including nearly \$8 million for foster care alone;

AND WHEREAS the Standing Committee on Social Programs of the 15th Legislative Assembly presented a report on child and family service matters that focused on strengthening existing child protection practices and ensuring that all provisions contained in the Child and Family Services Act be implemented and utilized in all communities of the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS the standing committee recommended that the government of the day provide a comprehensive response to the committee's report;

AND WHEREAS the requested response was never tabled and nor was any meaningful analysis of the highlighted issues ever provided;

AND WHEREAS other jurisdictions in Canada, including Ontario and British Columbia, have recently conducted comprehensive reviews of their own child protection regimes;

AND WHEREAS it has become patently obvious that the Child and Family Services Act is in need of a comprehensive review;

AND WHEREAS a review should include an examination of the administration and implementation of the act, the effectiveness of its provisions including the assignment of discretionary powers to child protection workers and the achievement of the objectives stated in the preamble, and may include recommendations for changes to the act and its regulations;

AND WHEREAS a review should also incorporate and respect traditional cultural values and approaches to conflict resolution;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly wishes to begin a comprehensive review of the Child and Family Services Act;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that this Legislative Assembly hereby establish a special committee to conduct a review of the Child and Family Services Act;

AND FURTHER, that the following Members be named to a special committee:

- the Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy;
- the Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu; and
- the Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko;

AND FURTHERMORE, that notwithstanding Rule 88(2), the following Members be named as alternate members to the special committee:

- the Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro; and
- the Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

AND FURTHERMORE, that the special committee prepares its terms of reference and presents them at the first opportunity during the sitting of the Legislative Assembly in October 2009.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. A motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to put forward this motion for the review of the Child and Family Services Act for a number of

reasons. However, before I go into some of these reasons, I want to stress my appreciation for the hard work and dedication of all social workers who are involved in the administration of the implementation of this act.

Unfortunately, from time to time, some children will need to be taken under the protection of the government. When this occurs we must ensure by way of this act and its implementation that it is done in the most reasonable and fair manner without jeopardizing that child's future health and happiness.

Our social workers are the people in the front line doing the apprehensions. They are the ones who are often putting their own safety on the line as parents are often not happy with the children being taken away. Threats of physical violence towards these workers is a reality.

I make this motion to review the act, not to criticize or judge these social workers. I recommend this review because I and many of my colleagues have heard concerns raised by our constituents on the implementation of the act and the certain clauses within the act itself.

In discussing this motion, several Members indicated their concerns focus not on the act itself but more on the implementation of the act. Any review done should focus on the implementation as well as the act itself. I agree that many of the concerns that people are raising may indeed be implementation issues. I also suggest that where implementation issues exist, possibly a number of reasons the implementation is not occurring as expected exist. For example, in some cases, the lack of implementation may be for financial reasons. In some cases, the lack of implementation may be due to lack of will by the policymakers and senior management. In some cases, it may be due to lack of will or ability of the frontline providers. And, in some cases, it may be because the act lacks clarity or certain clauses making it impossible to implement as written or intended.

Sometimes things look good on paper, but they don't really work in the real world. So to do a review of implementation, you need to be sure of the reason things are being implemented and what the intent of the action was and that it's based on the act.

I believe that implementation reviews must also include a review of the act. A review of the act is a review of its implementation. A review of the implementation of the act must include a review of the relevant section of the act. You can't really have one without the other.

This is a significant act. The professionals in the department worked on it for a number of years before implementing it in 1998. Professionals of the highest calibre worked on the development of a

unique act suited for the realities of living and working in the Northwest Territories. We must acknowledge the uniqueness of this act and applaud those who put so much work into getting it developed in the first place. However, things change and things evolve. If this act were written and implemented today, it would include a clause stating that it needs to be reviewed by this Legislature every X number of years; five, 10, four, whatever the case may be. The newest act passed by this Legislature, the Species at Risk Act, includes such a clause. It must be reviewed by this Legislative Assembly every 10 years. The intent of the review is to ensure that the preamble is still relevant, the act is meeting its intent, and that if the act is still relevant, it is being implemented accordingly.

I'm asking for nothing more for this act. This act is about the protection of children within the Northwest Territories. The act states: "It is recognized that decisions concerning children should be made in accordance with the best interest of children, with the recognition that different cultural values and practices must be respected in those determinations." This still holds true. Children are the first priority of this act and they must be. Reviewing the act and its implementation will help us be confident that the act and its implementation are still meeting that basic commitment to protect the children while recognizing the different cultural values and practices must be respected.

As I said earlier, the act is a big one. I believe that much of it is good and I expect that the review will support this claim. However, based on conversations with some constituents and stories I've heard from other MLAs, it's clear that some holes exist in the act and there are problems with its implementation. Some Members have indicated that a number of reviews have already been done. A lot of research has already been conducted. As recently as 2007, amendments were made to the act itself. These are all positive steps. Unfortunately, many of the recommendations that came from those reviews have not been acted upon. Further, they're located in a wide variety of different locations. This review will be an opportunity to compile all of that information and present it with recommendations in a focused and logical manner. It will be one document with direction to Cabinet and the department, based on what we find through research and what we have heard from the people of the Northwest Territories.

Right now many of the existing recommendations from a variety of sources are sitting on shelves building up dust. I think it's important not to lose all of the hard work done by others in this area. By way of the review, we can take the dust off of these old reports and recommendations, take the ones

that are still outstanding, and build them into one report.

I know that the professional staff within the department are working hard to rectify any implementations that they have identified. They've identified some. I believe when we go out, we'll hear others that may have been missed by the department. It does not take away the need, in my opinion, to do this review. In fact, by way of the review there is opportunity to provide some additional direction and lend support to the Department of Health and Social Services in this work. To do this review right, social workers and Health and Social Services staff will need to be included. I'm interested in hearing more from the social workers on what aspects of the act and its implementation are working, which areas are difficult and might need some modification, and what areas are definitely not working. They are currently the experts and deliver the services on the front line. A review can't be done without their input.

They aren't the only people that need to be consulted. Parents, NGOs, children who have gone through the system and are now adults, foster parents, and communities in general need to be engaged. I hope if this motion passes, the terms and references will include engaging all of these necessary and relevant stakeholders.

As indicated earlier, this is an incredibly important act. A lot of work was done on it. It is unique for the Northwest Territories. Unfortunately, since it passed in this House in 1998, it has not had a comprehensive review. It is unreasonable to assume that there aren't holes in it. Times change and opinions and technology evolve.

Some of the areas we have been made aware of where holes exist either in the act or by way of implementation include, but are not limited to:

1. The role of the child and family service committees in each community of the Northwest Territories. The act says there should be one in every community. Right now there are none in any communities.
2. The gap exists in the system with respect to homeless youth between the ages of 16 and 19 who aren't supported through the act and aren't eligible for financial assistance. This may be a combined issue between ECE and Health and Social Services. Regardless, this review will help put some focus on that issue.
3. Is there enough protection for social workers who must, according to the act, apprehend based on pretty much any allegation even when the worker knows that the complaint is frivolous? This puts our social workers in a difficult position within their communities and affects their ability to do their jobs in cases of real concern.

4. The right of parents. I know this act is designed to protect children. However, in rare situations where social workers may have an unfair bias against a parent, a child may be apprehended on a permanent basis unnecessarily. This isn't good for the parents or the children who benefit from continued involvement with their birth parents.

Prior to this act, community social workers, those trained in the North with either a certificate or a diploma, were able to work with families and undertake apprehensions when necessary. Now, with this act, if they don't have a degree, they can't do that even if they have 10 to 15 years of directly related experience. I don't believe that this is reasonable in the NWT. Some of the best practitioners are those originally from the communities, with extensive years of service, as they understand the realities of living and working in those small communities.

Lastly, punishment for frivolous complaints aren't regularly followed up on. If people aren't worried about ramifications for making false complaints, false complaints will continue to be made. There are a lot more, but for the sake of time I will stop. In short, it is time to review the act and its implementation. The children of the NWT are our future and we must ensure that they receive the protection they require.

A review isn't a challenge of the department. I am not suggesting we challenge the department. I am suggesting that we work with the department and help them identify areas to improve the Child and Family Services Act. Is this act still relevant after 10 years? I think so. I am sure it is, but is it still exactly right? It is time to do the review to make sure that it is current, that it is right and that it is meeting the needs of our children. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. To the motion. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For someone who was here in the 13th Assembly when this legislation was brought forward, we insisted, especially for the majority of the Members in this House where we were the majority at one time in the 13th Assembly, that whatever legislation came forward that there had to be insurance that the communities would have been involved in whatever process that was put in place to ensure that they were involved with whatever happens to those children. The children of their communities, the decision that is being made with regards to the individuals in regards to social workers and establish a committee so that they can try to resolve this dispute at the community level.

Mr. Speaker, part of the legislation was the formation of the child and family services committees, which is a very important component

of this legislation. There are 10 clauses in the agreement which reflect that committee and what it is going to do and what powers it has and when they can be notified.

Mr. Speaker, the important part is that before any decision is made to take the child to the next step, which was the courts, that these committees would have been able to sit down with the social worker, the family, the plan and care committee workers and try to work out a solution so that those children would not end up in the court system, would not be permanent wards of the Government of the Northwest Territories by way of permanent custody. And yet, Mr. Speaker, I, for one, have fought for years to get a plan and care committee or community child and family services committee established in my community of Fort McPherson. There were people who were committed to sit on this committee. They volunteered their time and themselves to this committee, but yet there was no support whatsoever from the Government of the Northwest Territories to even find the resources, to find the support that they needed to do their job under this legislation.

For us to sit here 10 years after the fact, and more than 10 years since the legislation was passed in 1998, realize that now we have some 600-and-something children in care. It is expensive. It is \$8 million to the Government of the Northwest Territories and increasing, and yet you look at the number of children who are under permanent custody or wards of this government, are some 200 children. Almost 30 percent of those children are now in permanent custody. I, for one, feel strongly that whatever legislation we put in place which identifies an important component of how this process is going to work and not funded and say, we are sorry, the funding wasn't allocated. Well, you found \$8 million to fund the foster care side of it, but it is more important that the resources were put there in the first place and the community members were willing to volunteer for this committee.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to realize that the legislation that was put forward had great intentions. But yet, Mr. Speaker, if the important component is not there by way of inclusion of communities, inclusion of a process that would try to resolve these issues before they got in courts and also the cost of the court time, the cost of the social worker time, the cost of the policing costs, all these costs you add up could have paid for these family care committees long before where we are today.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to also realize that we also have the system in place that was mentioned in regards to what happens to these children after they turn 16. The thing that frustrates me is that a large number of these children who

basically ended up in the care of this government by way of foster care, by way of permanent custody and turn 16, got themselves in trouble with the law because of petty crimes, are now in our justice system by way of our courts, by way of our jail facilities. A lot of these young people are now in southern institutions. Was that the intention of this legislation? I hope not. But that is a result that we are facing because this legislation wasn't followed the way it was passed in this Legislature, but, more importantly, how it was carried out by the Department of Health and Social Services to ensure that that very important component was there to try to resolve these disputes before they came to be more than what they should have been which try to have these things resolved at the community level by the community representatives and trying to find solutions for the community and residents but, more importantly, for the children of our community.

Mr. Speaker, the most important asset we have as people are our children. The same thing applies to our communities. Those children are our future. They are our future leaders. More importantly, they are what maintains our society.

Mr. Speaker, I hate ranting on the point of what has happened in the past, but I think sometimes you have to learn from your mistakes in the past in order to go forward. I always go back to what happened in residential school where the government-of-the-day had great intentions in regards to the White Paper to assimilate native children into white society and make them white children, which they weren't. This concept of what we are doing here by way of using legislation to find ways of apprehending children, finding ways to break up homes and take the children out of our home isn't much different than what happened back then. I think it is important to realize that, from First Nations communities, this is one of the most irritating things that we have to deal with from community leaders, from MLAs to the chiefs, to our counsellors, to our family members, to our siblings and to our relatives, because we all live in the same environment.

I think it is important to realize that what we are doing here hopefully would not have us end up in the courts or end up in another major lawsuit because government policy wasn't followed like it was intended and someone took the wrong route in regards to how they implement it because they felt that section really isn't that important so let's not implement that section. We will just go directly to the courts and let the courts make a decision what is going to happen to this child. That, for me, is the downfall of this legislation.

If that legislation was followed as it was basically passed in this Legislature, we would not be here today. It hasn't been and because of that, we have

to pay for it today. That is why I support a comprehensive review of this legislation going to the communities that basically have the highest number of children that have been in the system and talk to the community, talk to the parents, talk to the children, talk to the foster care parents and find out why this system is not working.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion. I ask that the other Members support it also. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. To the motion. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In principle, I am very supportive of the review of the Child and Family Services Act. Mr. Speaker, the motion is calling for special committee but I would like to move an amendment to the motion and have the review done by our Social Programs committee.

MOTION TO AMEND MOTION 21-16(3),
CARRIED

I MOVE, seconded by the Honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Motion 21-16(3), Establishment of a Special Committee to Review the Child and Family Services Act be amended by:

1. Deleting the words "Establishment of a Special Committee to" from the title of the motion and inserting the word "of" after the word "Review";
2. Deleting the word "comprehensive" from the twentieth paragraph and inserting the words "and its implementation" after the words "Child and Family Services Act";
3. Deleting the words "establish a special committee" in the twenty-first paragraph and inserting the words "direct the Standing Committee on Social Programs";
4. Inserting the words "and its implementation and present its findings to this House at the earliest opportunity" in the twenty-first paragraph after the words "Child and Family Services Act";
5. Deleting the twenty-second and twenty-third paragraphs; and
6. Deleting the words "Special Committee prepares its terms of reference" in the twenty-fourth paragraph and inserting the words "Standing Committee on Social Programs prepare additional terms of reference for the review of the Child and Family Services Act and its implementation".

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the amendment. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the amendment, we had many of the Members and I and others as well had some discussions after I did the original notice of motion. The bottom line is it is about who is going to be doing the review. It is not much difference between a special committee and Social Programs doing it. Social Programs already exists. As long as the review gets done, I am happy and content. I don't mind one way or another. I think the Social Programs committee is a good committee and they are more than capable of doing this review in a comprehensive manner. I support the motion to amend.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. To the amendment. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a seconder of the motion, I also concur to the amendment. I, for one, feel that this work is long overdue. The sooner we get on with it and get down to the bottom of what the problems are and finding solutions to resolving these outstanding issues, I think it is important that we get on with it. With that, I will be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. To the amendment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: To the motion as amended. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak in support of the motion as amended calling for a review of the Child and Family Services Act and its implementation. Mr. Speaker, all Members are aware from their work with constituents that there are very complex issues involved in family law or among the most difficult, painful and contentious situations we encounter. Issues involving family breakdown, the care and safety of our children, situations of controversial evidence and decisions dictating custody and visitation are painful for everyone. For parents, children and the protection and enforcement officials called upon to act on behalf of society, this is very hard going.

The will of the courts, access to legal aid, the unfair balance of resources between government and legal aid lawyers, support of our legal aid professionals and the actual and potential role of court workers all interact with child and family services' decisions and policy and are an area that must be considered in this review. Recently, the Department of Justice has implemented a number of initiatives that will help. For example, the mediation service for couples applying for divorce now can be considered as mandatory in some jurisdictions.

Our law of governing these situations, the Child and Family Services Act, is 10 years old, yet we know there are aspects of it that have not been acted upon and there are gaps such as the 16 to 18-year-old youth mentioned. Child and family services is an area of public policy that is always on the move, changing with case law and emerging attitudes and the development of improved means to bring about humane solutions to disputes and situations of hardship. The basis of society's attitudes is constantly changing, especially in regards to gender balance and custody orders and views on the nature of parental control and definitions of abuse. At a minimum, our implementation of law must react to these changes and continually improve itself in this extremely delicate area of public policy.

It is time we looked again long, hard and thoughtfully at how we help children and parents through the most difficult times of their lives. From our work with constituents, we also know that our processes have some serious shortcomings. It is time to take stock and refocus our ability to help in keeping with today and safeguarding our future that is our children.

I fully support the motion as amended for a review of child and family services with special regard to the children and the role of the parent and will vote in support of the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. To the motion as amended. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, am in full support of this motion and to the intent of the motion, which is that we need a review of the Child and Family Services Act. Like my colleague Mr. Abernethy, I want to state that I am not speaking against the activities, the jobs and the work that social workers do. I think that they do a fantastic job, as has already been stated. I support them, but children are our greatest resource and we need to protect them. The families who children live with are a necessary resource for children. At times, families break down so we need to have an act which works well, that can protect children and that also can assist families in providing that protection to children.

The motion states that there are expressed concerns with the current Child and Family Services Act. I won't go into them. They have been mentioned in the whereases. They have been mentioned by my colleagues. There are concerns out there. I think they should be dealt with.

Over time society changes. Our expectations change. Accepted practices change. That is where we are at in relation to our Child and Family Services Act. Family law practice now as opposed to 10 years ago encourages that we avoid the court process. Certainly our act does not encourage the

avoidance of the court process. We are moving more towards mediation, conciliation and arbitration in many areas, but also in the area of family law. I think that is something that needs to be provided for in our act. Our act doesn't allow for that. At the moment, the only option for a parent who has had a child apprehended is to go to court. That has proven to be a process which does not work. It is proven to be ineffective for the child and for the parents.

I also believe that we need to establish a child advocate. I was very pleased to see that the Department of Justice is considering the establishment of just such a position. We need to have someone who can act who is endowed with the authority to be the protector of our children's rights. The Child and Family Services Act is a very large and very comprehensive piece of legislation. Any large, comprehensive piece of legislation should be renewed periodically. It was mentioned by Mr. Bromley that this one is 10 years old. Many pieces of legislation that we are currently putting in place have a provision for a review after a certain period of time. This particular act does not and it's time, I believe, that we do review this piece of legislation. We need to determine whether or not the act is working as it should. Ten years ago, it was seen to be the be-all and the end-all, but as times change and as the act is actually put in place and we work through the processes, we have determined that there are some areas where it's not working and certainly the anecdotal evidence, which I have heard and which other Members have heard and have seen, indicates that it is not working perfectly.

To me the review will identify areas of concerns and areas that are creating problems. It will allow us to look at those areas and to make recommendations to make the system better and that's what I'm after. So I urge all Members to support this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion as amended. The honourable Minister for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think that we can all agree that children have a fundamental right to be safe and receive loving care and support. Children also have the right to live in an environment that enables them to succeed in life. Parents have responsibility for raising their children and ensuring these rights are respected. Unfortunately, in the North and across this country there are cases of child maltreatment, neglect and abuse. The NWT Child and Family Services Act was put in place to ensure procedures are in place to both protect the safety and well-being of children and to provide services to families who need help.

Mr. Speaker, our act is a unique piece of legislation that was designed after many years of consultation, to emphasize the value of cultural and spiritual beliefs, the importance of immediate and extended family and the value of community participation. It is one of a kind made-in-the-North legislation. In fact, the NWT Child and Family Services Act is the only legislation in Canada that is inclusive of community participation in decision-making and, above all, this act was designed by the 13th Assembly to ensure that the best interests of the children are respected.

Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate that the act is more than 10 years old. Practice and legislation must be kept current to meet the needs of the people we represent and I also appreciate that there is a concern with the existing legislative framework and some of these applications and implementation.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the work of the committee deals on the efforts of many communities, families, parents and child protection workers to improve the lives of the children. Their efforts can be seen in our apprehension rates, which have gone down by 8.6 percent over the last three years, and by the number of children receiving services while in the care of their parents and families, which has been going up. There are more children, at least 52 percent of children, who are being taken care of by extended family. In fact, in many places in our Territory, plan of care committees involve all of the extended family of children in care.

Mr. Speaker, I have in my possession, I happened to run into a document here called, it's a report on matters related to Family and Social Services Act, which was tabled on May 17th, 2007. It was chaired by Ms. Sandy Lee. Membership of the committee included a Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Braden, Mr. Robert C. McLeod, Mr. Jackson Lafferty and Mr. Calvin Pokiak. That was the last review. It was a clause that was reviewed. It was a bill that passed to allow a review. It put an obligation on the child protection workers and Department of Social Services to make sure that they appear before court within 72 hours to justify why a child should be in care. In reviewing that bill we heard many of the concerns that the Members are raising and it is a fine piece of work, I must say, and I hope that...I have had a chance to re-read it and there were lots of good recommendations made and I am sure that this work the committee and the Members are suggesting will build not only on this work, but many other reviews that were done before.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that whatever we do in this House it must always be done to protect children and ensure that they can grow up to be healthy parents. I would like to just give my commitment to the Members to work with the committee, and the Department of Health and Social Services and myself are ready and willing to provide any

assistance that the committee may require. I look forward to working together on this most important work that we have for this Legislature, which is, first and foremost, protection of the best interests of our children.

So, Mr. Speaker, in closing, I'd like to just say that as is the normal procedure in this House, as this motion is a recommendation to this government, the Cabinet will be abstaining from the vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. I'll allow the mover of the original motion to have closing remarks. Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Minister for her comments and I'd also like to thank all the other Members on this side of the House for their comments and their support of this motion. I think it's important. I think the review is necessary and as a Member of the Social Programs committee and deputy chair, I actually look forward to getting it in and starting to work with my colleagues on doing the review. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I'd just like to request a recorded vote. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The Member is requesting a recorded vote. Would all those in favour of the motion as amended, please stand.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Bromley.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed to the motion as amended, please stand. All those abstaining from the motion, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Lafferty; Ms. Lee; Mr. Miltenberger; Mr. Roland; Mr. McLeod, Dehcho; Mr. McLeod, Inuvik Twin Lakes; Mr. McLeod, Yellowknife South.

MR. SPEAKER: The results of the recorded vote: nine for, none opposed, seven abstaining. The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member from Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

---Unanimous consent granted.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member from Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize Charlie Furlong, a constituent from Aklavik, in the gallery. Good to see you up and about there, Charlie. Welcome to the House.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I'd like to welcome everyone in the gallery today. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole on bills and other matters: Tabled Document 7-16(3), Ministerial Benefits Policy, and Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Commissioner's Land Act, with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. Two items under Committee of the Whole: Tabled Document 7-16(3) and Bill 13. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee wishes to review Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Commissioner's Land Act, during Committee of the Whole and we'd also like to suggest that we get right into Bill 13 prior to taking a break, if that is okay with the committee.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): With that, we will go on to Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Commissioner's Land Act. With that, I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the bill for any comments. Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You have before you Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Commissioner's Land Act, with amendments made by the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure and agreed to by me, I made a commitment on behalf of the department to return to the standing committee in the fall with a legislative proposal that deals solely with performance security.

The Commissioner's Land Act is a very old statute that was derived from the Federal/Territorial Lands Act. We recognized that the act in its present form does not reflect modern day land administration principles or practices. Accordingly, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs will begin a comprehensive review of the statute in the coming months, with the intention that a new statute be considered for the next Legislative Assembly.

In the meantime, Bill 13 is before you, which addresses some urgently needed changes to enable the act to function. The bill now contains three substantive amendments. They are: a new provision making Commissioner's land exempt from the application of the Residential Tenancies Act; an amendment to enable the authorization of the Commissioner to start legal proceedings against trespassers instead of the Commissioner himself; finally, an amendment to exclude the Commissioner from liability for injury or death when activities take place on developed Commissioner's land without the written permission of the local land agent.

Bill 13 also contains several amendments that are not substantive in nature but were made on the advice of legislative counsel. Thank you for this opportunity to present proposed Bill 13 as amended. I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. At this time I would like to ask the committee if you have any general comments. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure conducted its public review of Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Commissioner's Land Act, on May 26, 2009. The committee would like to thank the Minister and his staff for presenting the bill. The committee also thanks the witness, Mr. Kevin O'Reilly, who contributed to the review.

The bill amends the Commissioner's Land Act. It includes amendments that would provide that the Residential Tenancies Act does not apply on Commissioner's land held under a lease authorized under the Commissioner's Land Act, designate the Minister or a person authorized by the Minister as the person responsible for initiating court proceedings regarding wrongful or unlawful use, possession or occupation of Commissioner's land and limit the liability of the Commissioner as an occupier of Commissioner's Land.

The bill had included an amendment adding a regulation-making power respecting the posting of security when Commissioner's land is leased for commercial or industrial use. However, the committee members asked to see this authority be a mandatory requirement and that these requirements should be expressed in the statute, not the regulations. The Minister concurred with an amending motion to remove this regulation-making power in another motion making a minor change to another clause. He also agreed to return with another legislative proposal in the fall which would add the security provisions to the statute.

Following the committee's review, a motion was carried to report Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Commissioner's Land Act, to the Assembly as ready for Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes the committee's opening comments on Bill 13. Individual Members may have additional questions or comments as we proceed. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the bill if he will be bringing in witnesses. Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I would.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree the Minister brings in his witnesses?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you escort the witnesses in, please.

Mr. Minister, for the record, could you introduce your witnesses?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I have with me to my left Mr. Jeff Polakoff, deputy minister of MACA; to my right I have Bev Chamberlin, director of lands administration with MACA; and also we have with us Kelly McLaughlin, who is the legislative consultant. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Minister. Welcome, witnesses. Are there any general comments in regards to Bill 13? Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to, again while the Minister is here with his staff, just commend the Minister for his working with the committee and we do look forward to this LP coming forward in the fall. We do appreciate his staff and Mr. Minister's understanding and appreciation of where we are coming from. So we do look forward to that and I just wanted to thank him and his staff for their understanding. Thanks again.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments. Does committee agree clause by clause?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): In your grey binders, Bill 13. Page 1, Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Commissioner's Land Act, clause 1.

---Clauses 1 through 6 inclusive approved

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): To the bill as a whole.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does committee agree that we concluded Bill 13?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bill 13 is now ready for third reading.

---Bill 13 as a whole approved for third reading

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): With that, I would like to thank the Minister, thank the witnesses. Sergeant-

at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out. Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I will rise to report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Commissioner's Land Act, and I would like to report progress and that Bill 13 is ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 6: SPECIES AT RISK (NWT) ACT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 6, Species at Risk (NWT) Act, be read for the third time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 6 has had third reading.

---Carried

---Applause

Before I proceed to orders of the day, colleagues, I would like to inform you that I overlooked a very special occasion in the House yesterday. We had one of our Table Officer's -- Ms. Gail Bennett's -- birthday yesterday.

---Applause

With that, Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

PRINCIPAL CLERK OF OPERATIONS (Ms. Bennett): Orders of the day for Thursday, June 4, 2009, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements

3. Members' Statements
 4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
 5. Returns to Oral Questions
 6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
 7. Acknowledgements
 8. Oral Questions
 9. Written Questions
 10. Returns to Written Questions
 11. Petitions
 12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
 13. Tabling of Documents
 14. Notices of Motion
 15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
 16. Motions
 - Motion 23-16(3): Referral of On-line Petitions Issue to the Rules and Procedures Committee
 - Motion 24-16(3): Income Exemption for Newly Employed Housing Tenants
 17. First Reading of Bills
 18. Second Reading of Bills
 19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 7-16(3), Ministerial Benefits Policy
 20. Report of Committee of the Whole
 21. Third Reading of Bills
 - Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Commissioner's Land Act
 22. Prorogation
- MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, June 4, 2009, at 1:30 p.m.
- ADJOURNMENT
- The House adjourned at 4:22 p.m.

